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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993

TRAINING AND RESEARCH: UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH

Programme budget implications of draft resolution II recommended by the Second Committee (A/47/729, para. 21)

Fifteenth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/82) concerning the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). During its consideration of the statement, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information.

2. As the Secretary-General indicated in paragraph 2 of his statement, by operative paragraphs 1 to 3 of draft resolution II recommended by the Second Committee (A/47/729, para. 21), the General Assembly would decide, inter alia: (a) that the UNITAR building would be immediately transferred to the United Nations in return for the cancellation of the debt of the Institute and coverage of its financial obligations for 1992; (b) that the headquarters of the Institute would be transferred to Geneva; (c) that the Secretary-General would be requested to designate a liaison officer to organize and coordinate the existing training programmes and research activities relating to training in New York within existing resources, drawing as appropriate on the services of senior fellows who should be funded from voluntary contributions to the Institute; and (d) that, as of 1 January 1993, the funding of all the Institute's administrative budget and training programmes would be covered from voluntary contributions, donations, special-purpose grants and executing agency overheads. In this connection, the Advisory Committee points out that unless the General Assembly decides otherwise the effective date for extrabudgetary funding will be the date on which the Assembly adopts the draft resolution.

3. In paragraph 16 of his statement (A/C.5/47/82), the Secretary-General stated that should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution II, an additional appropriation of $15,989,000 would be required under section 34 (Special expenses) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993. The details of the requirements were provided in paragraphs 8 to 11 and a summary was given in paragraph 14 of the statement.

4. As recalled in paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's statement, by resolution 38/177 of 19 December 1983, the General Assembly provided the Institute with an advance of $886,000 from the regular budget. The Advisory Committee was informed by representatives of the Secretary-General that UNITAR reimbursed $200,000 to the United Nations, leaving a debt of $686,000.

5. According to paragraph 8 of the Secretary-General's statement, the UNITAR debt to the United Nations, which is to be cancelled in return for the immediate transfer of the building to the United Nations, amounts to $11,822,500 as at 31 December 1992. The Advisory Committee has since been informed that the total debt amounts to $11.6 million as of 31 December 1992. Of this amount, $4 million was advanced to UNITAR for the purchase of the land on which the building is situated. The balance represents mainly advances to UNITAR to meet the shortfalls in its administrative budget. The Committee was informed by representatives of the Secretary-General that of the latter amount $1.5 million was advanced in 1992.

6. The Advisory Committee sees no reason why the cancellation of the UNITAR debt should require an additional appropriation. As indicated in paragraph 4 above, an amount of some $686,000 has already been appropriated. The Committee wishes to point out that with the exception of the $1.5 million which has been committed for UNITAR in 1992, the balance has all been financed through savings in United Nations programme budgets since 1983. Therefore, since these amounts have already been absorbed, there is no need for an additional appropriation in respect of them. Nor, in the opinion of the Advisory Committee, is there need, at this time, for an appropriation in respect of the $1.5 million committed in 1992 and such amounts as may be committed in 1993 (see para. 11 below); the need for an appropriation can be determined in the context of the second performance report for the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993. The Advisory Committee recommends further that the accounting problem caused by the UNITAR budget be covered by an appropriate explanation in the accounts, taking into consideration the current value of the UNITAR building and land.

7. In paragraph 9 of his statement (A/C.5/47/82), the Secretary-General stated that for the United Nations to take over the UNITAR building, it would be necessary for the Organization to incur expenses related to the maintenance and provision of security for the premises, estimated at $647,000 in 1993 and at $2,907,000 for repairs and improvements.

8. The Advisory Committee believes that any appropriation for these purposes would have to be preceded by a detailed report describing the use to which the building would be put and justifying the repairs, maintenance and improvements in terms of that use. Pending receipt of that report no appropriation would be necessary at this time.

9. The Secretary-General indicated in paragraph 10 of his statement that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/197 of 11 December 1987, the existing staff members of the UNITAR New York office (1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 P-2 and 7 General Service) are to be absorbed within the United Nations system. The total costs related to absorbing these staff members, which are estimated at $612,500, include $300,500 for the financing of the staff to be redeployed, $15,500 for rental of office space and $296,500 for general operating costs for six months (A/C.5/47/82, para. 11).

10. The Advisory Committee points out that commitment authority of $400,000 has already been given by the General Assembly for transitional requirements for the Institute for 1993, pending the resumed session of the General Assembly (see resolution 47/219, sect. XXIV). The Committee notes from paragraphs 11 and 14 of the Secretary-General's statement that the estimates for transitional arrangements for these staff members are based on six months, from 1 January to 30 June 1993. The Committee requests the Secretary-General to make every effort to place the staff involved quickly within the United Nations system, thus not incurring additional costs. Additional costs could also be avoided if the staff concerned are placed in such a way as to minimize additional rental costs, wherever possible, and every effort should be made to achieve economies in general operating costs.

11. The Advisory Committee has been informed that of the $400,000 authorized by the General Assembly, $253,500 had already been committed. The Committee, taking into account the contents of paragraph 13 of the Secretary-General's statement, recommends that the Secretary-General be given commitment authority for an additional $200,000 to cover requirements through June 1993 and that actual requirements be reported in the context of the second performance report for 1992-1993.

12. Under the circumstances, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should draft resolution II recommended by the Second Committee (A/47/729, para. 21) be adopted, no additional appropriation would be required at this time.